



NEWS

United States Conference of Mayors

1620 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006

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Contact:

At Conference of Mayors

Kay Scrimger, Shari Garner

(619) 235-4081, 82 (June 14 - 20)

(202) 293-7330 X154 (After June 20)

At Waste Management

Dick Houpt, Geri Powell

(708) 572-2445

1991 CITY LIVABILITY AWARDS PRESENTED TO TEN MAYORS IN
SAN DIEGO AT CONFERENCE OF MAYORS' ANNUAL MEETING:
NEWARK, N.J. AND PROVO, UTAH, ARE FIRST-PLACE WINNERS

SAN DIEGO, June 17: Mayors Sharpe James of Newark, N.J., and Joseph A. Jenkins of Provo, Utah, have received top honors in the 1991 City Livability Awards Program, sponsored by The United States Conference of Mayors and Waste Management of North America, Inc.

Mayors Cathye Ray, Mesquite, Texas; J.E. Bud Clark, Portland, Oregon; Richard Arrington, Jr., Birmingham, Alabama; and John P. Rousakis, Savannah, Georgia, each received an Outstanding Achievement Award for cities of 100,000 or more.

Among cities of less than 100,000 in population, Outstanding Achievement Awards went to Mayors Robert N. Stewart, Columbus, Indiana; Robert Menendez, Union City, New Jersey; Louis D. LaPolla, Utica, New York; and John Heilman, West Hollywood, California.

The Awards were announced on Monday, June 17, at the Annual Luncheon of the Conference of Mayors' meeting in San Diego, California. Presenting the Awards to the Mayors was Mr. Phillip B. Rooney, President of Waste Management, Inc., the world's largest provider of comprehensive waste services, with operations throughout North America and more than a dozen foreign countries.

City Livability Awards honor Mayors for exemplary leadership in development of effective programs that improve the livability of their cities. Winners are selected by an independent panel of judges.

In his presentation, Mr. Rooney said, "We at Waste Management are convinced of the importance of recognizing elected local leaders who make outstanding contributions to the quality of life in their cities. Waste Management is proud to encourage leadership that will result in more liveable cities for America's people."

The 1991 City Livability Program had the largest number of applications in its twelve-year history -- 120 applications submitted by 117 cities. Programs described by cities as contributing to a better quality of urban life ranged from those in economic development and environmental efforts to programs for the hungry and homeless.

According to J. Thomas Cochran, Executive Director of the Conference of Mayors, "The 120 applications developed by our Mayors display a wealth of mayoral leadership strategies for increased urban livability. Whatever the program, each shares a common theme--exemplary and courageous leadership of Mayors as they improve the quality of life in their communities."

CITIES ABOVE 100,000 IN POPULATION

Against All Odds, Mayor Sharpe James is Creating the "Newark Renaissance"

Mayor Sharpe James of Newark has won First-Place in the 1991 City Livability Awards Program for his exceptional development and management of a true renaissance in his city. Thanks to his leadership, Newark has successfully undertaken a monumental effort to achieve economic development and growth. It has upgraded its bond rating, is building a new movie theatre for the first time in fifty years in the downtown area, and has achieved 7,500 new housing units, with one-third of these affordable for low- and moderate-income occupants.

As Newark's City Livability application says, "Once beset with the problems of despair, decay, and neglect, Newark has over the last five years reversed its direction and changed its image to one of the top twenty-five places to live in the United States, as described by Money Magazine in late 1988. Its impressive success is due in part to Newark city government's "one-stop shop" approach to development, which consolidates development functions, strategies, and programs for neighborhood, commercial corridor, and downtown revitalization.

The City Livability panel of judges was especially impressed with the Mayor's leadership and his "steady effort at attacking the city's problems from a hundred different angles," an effort in which "Mayor James is playing a major role." Concluding that

Newark's effort "deserves positive recognition for its revitalization," they named the city First-Place in this year's competition.

In particular, the judges noted that Newark's impressive real estate resurgence has a multi-pronged approach--new construction, adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures. "Newark has been transformed by \$2.5 billion in new investments in residential and economic development," they pointed out, largely due to the Mayor's focus upon accessibility, collaboration, and partnership. A "true renaissance" is occurring, the judges emphasized, lauding the statement in the city's application, that "Urban decay is not totally inevitable, and urban leaders can make a difference."

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Birmingham, Alabama: Affirming Dreams and Dispelling Old Prejudices Through Progressive Minority Business Strategy

Mayor Richard Arrington, Jr., is presiding over an exciting and effective strategy which addresses minority business needs in a variety of ways, including access to capital, construction trades, retention and recruitment, and building leadership.

Like the phoenix, Birmingham has risen from the ashes of its years as a hostile battlefield between the races, symbolized by the church bombing in the early 1960's and the fire hoses turned upon children and adults. According to the city's application, "Liveability is more than the minimum requirements to keep body, mind, and soul together. People are more than the sum of their physical needs. People must reach for more. In America, we call this the pursuit of happiness. In Birmingham, against the grain of a sad history of exclusion and discrimination, we have a plan to make life for our people better, we have a plan to affirm dreams."

Through Mayor Arrington's vision, the Birmingham Plan has identified a comprehensive strategy for minority and disadvantaged business enterprises. He has enlisted business leaders of the community to join the city government in coordinating almost \$10 million of financing assistance to these businesses, providing technical assistance as well as loans. The program has a 98 percent collection rate on loans, better than experienced by private institutions represented on the loan committee. The City Livability panel of judges concluded that Mayor Arrington is truly the mover and shaker behind Birmingham's minority/disadvantaged business approach. In the words of one judge, "This is the first time I have read about a minority business enterprise that really works!"

Mesquite, Texas, Focuses Upon Quality of Life as Major Development Strategy

Under the leadership of Mayor Cathye Ray, who took office in April, and her predecessor, George A. Venner, Sr., Mesquite is successfully balancing growth and "greenness," in an effort to nurture and protect the city's beauty.

According to the city's application, "Five years ago there was little landscaping, streets were littered, development taking place paid little regard to the natural environment." With an aggressive campaign--"Mesquite Green and Growing"--the city government is "greener" and still growing, at present the third fastest growing city in Texas. In fact, the application states that, "Mesquite has gotten so green that we have won an impressive three environmental awards in the past year"--the Keep Texas Beautiful Governor's Community Achievement Award, the Texas Forestry Service First Place Urban Forestry Award, and a Tree City USA in 1991, named by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

The judges lauded mayoral leadership in realizing the important, positive relationship between marketing Mesquite and the way it looks. They praised its strong emphasis on the "Keep America Beautiful" program, its impressive urban forestry efforts, and its establishment of a bird sanctuary. They also noted that it is a cost-effective program, using volunteers, private contributions, and hotel-motel tax proceeds.

Portland, Oregon: Community Planning for Future Generations

Mayor J.E. Bud Clark is leading a community planning effort in Portland, Oregon, which according to the City Livability panel of judges is "a national model of an exceptionally effective city planning process, characterized by strong citizen participation." Calling Portland's planning efforts "lightyears ahead of most cities," the judges noted that it is also developing future leaders through its careful, all-inclusive planning process, a standard nationally."

Portland's application points out that the Portland Future Focus is unique in that, "Although other cities have completed strategic planning processes, most cities either have concentrated on traditional issues such as economic development and land use planning or have limited public involvement to a handful of community leaders. Portland is embracing a broad range of quality of life issues and is reaching out to community interests that have not participated in community decision-making. No city of Portland's size has completed a project of this scope."

"You cannot find a better democratic process than in Portland," one of the City Livability judges emphasized. Over fifty-five community leaders are leading the planning effort, based on international, national, state and local trends that

will affect the downtown and neighborhoods. The city's application states that, "Portland Future Focus challenges citizens and leaders to anticipate change rather than react to current crises," and seeks to "build a social, educational, economic and service infrastructure to meet the needs of children and families."

Savannah, Georgia: A Systematic Approach to Neighborhood Revitalization and Citizen Participation

Mayor John Rousakis is leading Savannah to the nation's forefront in neighborhood revitalization. Under his direction, the city government has developed the "Showcase Savannah Program," a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revival, which engages every operating department of the city government.

Showcase Savannah is a four-part process--planning, targeted city services, increased citizen responsibility, and increased private participation. In the planning phase, city planners work together with neighborhood residents to decide that neighborhood's greatest service and facility needs. Neighborhood organizers work to develop a neighborhood association with a broad membership base and strong leadership. The city government staff trains residents to conduct a field survey to gather data about housing, lighting, streets, sidewalks, litter, and derelict vehicles from which a work program with measurable objectives and strategies is developed.

According to the city's application, in the neighborhoods where Showcase Savannah has been implemented, the number of crack houses and drug corners was reduced by 79 percent in one and 67 percent in another; litter ratings fell dramatically; house fires were reduced by over 40 percent; over 200 tons of litter and debris were removed by citizens during neighborhood cleanups. The judges were particularly impressed by the high level of neighborhood acceptance and by the "conceptual and follow-through aspects of the revitalization strategy," particularly the emphasis upon finding out from citizens what their needs are.

CITIES UNDER 100,000 IN POPULATION

Provo, Utah, Wins First-Place City Livability Award for Courageous Economic Development Strategy

Provo, Utah, has won a First-Place City Livability Award for cities under 100,000 in population for the vision and skill of Mayor Joseph A. Jenkins, Mayor since 1985, and of his predecessor, former Mayor James Ferguson. Their foresight and

leadership placed the city into the role of entrepreneur in economic development, with, as Provo's application states, "all of its risk or reward."

Mayoral leadership has brought the city from an economic decline in the early 1980's to a successful turnaround, symbolized by the East Bay business park with twenty-two business and commercial tenants, bringing 5-6,000 new jobs to Provo since 1987. The critical variable in the East Bay development was the decision of the city government to become the prime developer in the project when a market feasibility study indicated that a private developer would face difficult obstacles.

Key benefits of East Bay have been an increase in the city's tax base and in the percentage of sales tax dollars that come to the city, major business attraction of such firms as the Sears Telecatalog Center, and increased "business credibility" for the city. According to the city's application, "The success of East Bay is a tribute to the skill and vision of two mayors and the men and women who worked with them. Both mayors were willing to stand up to skeptical citizenry and a concerned Council and promise that after an initial period of investment and hard work, East Bay would prove to be a savvy investment for the people of Provo."

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Columbus, Indiana: Outstanding Achievement Award for Ambitious Capital Projects Strategy--"Columbus 2000"

In 1985, Mayor Robert N. Stewart of Columbus, Indiana, set in motion a community public-private partnership to guide his city into the next century. Called "Columbus 2000," this was an action plan to combat the down-sizing of major industries in the community, a high unemployment rate, and concern for downtown vitality.

Its success in revitalizing downtown Columbus and its model for public-private cooperation led the City Livability panel of judges to honor Columbus with a 1991 Outstanding Achievement Award. Columbus 2000's capital improvements projects include expansion and modernization of the historic Central Fire Station, streetscape improvements, extensive improvements to Mill Race Park at the edge of the central business district, renovations and landscaping for the Courthouse, and a new entry to the downtown area from the interstate.

The City Livability panel of judges lauded Mayor Stewart's approach to downtown vitality--in his words, "Downtown is everybody's neighborhood!" Since the Mayor took office, more than 42 companies have expanded locally or located new operations in Columbus. Investment has been \$370 million, with 3,817 new

jobs created, and more than \$3 million in grants have come to the city. The city's application sums up its philosophy, a quote from Euripides: "Where the good things are, there is home."

Union City, New Jersey's Thoughtful Blending of Both Young and Older Citizens Earns Outstanding Achievement Award

Mayor Robert Menendez of Union City, New Jersey, has received an Outstanding City Livability Award in 1991 for his special definition of livability--"where every person, young or old, is regarded as an important asset in the life of the community." The "Menendez Model of Education" starts early, before most educational systems begin, and continues throughout life, blending old and young people in educational interaction, "which enriches and brings purpose to their lives," according to the City Livability application.

Foundation stones of Mayor Menendez's intergenerational approach to education are: 1) affordable, accessible, and reliable daycare for pre-school children of low-income working families, 2) teaching of good parenting skills, and 3) tapping the special qualities and talents of the city's older citizens. To carry out these goals, the Mayor and a team of education and community specialists, along with city department staff and citizens, designed the Union City Family Education Project. The daycare program, currently serving 270 children, is the only multi-center, multi-cultural daycare program in New Jersey that has received accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs.

The panel of City Livability judges praised Mayor Menendez for his energetic and creative leadership and cited Union City as a model of how a city can use thoughtful and creative educational programs as the ultimate economic development tool. In the words of the city's application, Union City is "building a skilled local workforce, creating an educated and enlightened citizenry, and drawing the best talent to local public administration."

Utica, New York, Earns Outstanding Achievement Award for Innovative Approach to Waste Reduction and Recycling

Mayor Louis D. LaPolla of Utica, New York, has been awarded a 1991 Outstanding Achievement Award for leading the city's effort to encourage the most advantageous ways to reduce and recycle waste. Utica's Solid Waste Management Program is designed to reach those who live in apartment buildings, single-family homes, and who operate small businesses.

Working with the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Management Authority, Utica has reached out to businesses, hospitals, schools and factories to assist them in waste audits and in offering technical advice on waste reduction, reuse, or exchange and in recycling. The threefold approach includes user fees,